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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

SUBJECT Prices and Availability of Personal Consumer Goods and Food/Apartment Situation in Prague

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Consumer Goods and Services

2. "The following prices for personal consumer goods and services were in effect in Prague in summer 1953. They are in the new currency [since reform of 30 May 53].

Item	Price in Kes.
Light summer skirt	110.-
Light woman's dress	120.-
Pair of woman's summer shoes, medium quality	120.-
Pair of men's shoes, made to measure at the communal shoe enterprise, Prague	600.-
Rouge, medium quality	20.-
Birch water for the hair, 200 cm.	18.-
One jar of face cream	10.-
Tymolin toothpaste	2.-
Stora toothpaste	2.80
Small bar of toilet soap	3.60
Professional shampoo	9.40
Bottle of shampoo	.60
Comb, 18 cm	3.-
Talisman radio	980.-
Standing lamp	430.-
Woman's sweater made of cotton and wool	420.-
Solvina washing cream for hands, 1/2 kg	9.-

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<u>Item</u>	<u>Price in Kes.</u>
Quality soap, one bar	3.-
About 20 carnations (June)	5.-
Six roses	25.-
One ticket to a Communist movie	1.- to 4.-
One ticket to a Western movie	2.- to 5.-
One ticket to a newsreel	1.20

3. "The following food items were on display in shop windows: cheese, liquor, milk products, four kinds of butter, vegetables (although very scarce, even potatoes), fruit, tinned meat, sausages, ham and coffee.

<u>Vegetables</u>	<u>Price in Kes.</u>
Carrots, 1 kg	1.50
Red peppers, 1 kg	2.50
Onions, 1 kg	3.-
Garlic, 1 kg	13.-
Cucumbers, 1 kg	.70
Potatoes, 1 kg	4.-
Tomatoes, 1 kg	4.-
Radishes	.50
One cauliflower	2.50
One cabbage	.35
One kohlrabi	.25
One 'glass' (3/4 liter) of green peas	11.-

Sugar and cocoa were rarely available. Southern fruit was not available; nor were pure wool or woolen products. On Saturdays I used to see long queues for meat and tomatoes. The queues would be two-thirds women (aged 25-50) and one-third men (over 45).

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4. [redacted] Czechoslovakia is importing the following foods from other countries in the Soviet Orbit:

Tinned lobsters and tinned fish	-USSR
Margarine, frozen fish	-Poland
Eggs, wine	-Bulgaria

5. "Beer is available in large quantities:

$\frac{1}{2}$ liter (70) for 70 Heller
 $\frac{1}{2}$ liter (100) for 2 Crowns.

6. "Prices for sets of furniture (cheapest type):

Bedroom	3,000.- Kes.
Kitchen	3,000.- Kes.
Living room	3,000.- Kes.

7. "Typical slogans in shopwindows:

'Nova mena - vyhodnejši stravovani!': 'New currency - better food supply.'
 'Verni odkaz. Lenin a Stalina, S. Antoninon Zapotockym vpred k socialismu':
 'Trustworthy to the legacy of Lenin and Stalin, with Antonin Zapotocky
 forwards to Socialism'.
 'Sovetsky svaz nas vzor!': 'The Soviet Union our example'.
 'So Sovetskym Svazem na vesne easy!': 'With the USSR forever'.

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Employment and Salaries of Women

9. "The government has stopped the forced transfer of women to industry. It promotes volunteer transfer by women to industry, especially to the aircraft industry. Only a few women are interested in such jobs, however.

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[redacted] The women who are in industry are paid at the same rate as the men. The women employed by the army have been ordered there by the employment office. This began in autumn 1952. These women hold regular military pay-books like other members of the army reserve. They have the same military duties as soldiers in the reserve of the regular army.

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10.

[redacted] plenty of women working in brigades at the Letenska Plain (Letus Square).

11. "A hospital nurse who has been employed five years receives 600 crowns per month with flat and food. A doctor employed two years gets 1300 crowns per month. A woman factory worker gets 700 crowns per month.

Apartment Situation - Prague Area

12. "A family of four is glad these days if it can obtain a flat consisting of one room and a kitchen. One-room flats for single persons are not available at all. The one-room flats are occupied by families with children.
13. "Non-communists may have to wait three years for a simple flat. The best flats go to Communist bosses. They get the flats in new buildings. Army officers and members of the State Security Corps (SNE) also enjoy priority.
14. "The 'Living Quarters Committee' is still checking on the status of private flats. It visits flats without warning. If a person has a large flat (three rooms) he can only hold on to it if he agrees to take some tenants. The 'large' flats are usually divided into two. The 'adequate' living space for a family is 30 sq. m. To change one's place of residence the approval of the Living Quarters Committee is necessary. The owner or tenant of a flat cannot be forcibly evicted if the Committee has not supplied him with a new flat.
15. "During the holidays a tenant is not obliged to report to the SNE. It is enough for him to write down the address where he will be in the House Book (domovni kniha). The SNE makes regular checks on flats (snatkove kontroly bytu). If somebody is caught in a room who has not reported and registered in the House Book, he is immediately arrested. The owner of a House Book must report to the [SNE] headquarters of the district command if he is leaving his permanent residence for longer than seven days. This report must be made in writing and must indicate the place and period of temporary residence.

Movies

16. "The Soviet and Czechoslovak Communist films are badly attended by the Czechoslovak public. Among the movies from the West, the US ones are the best sellers. Mostly younger people are in the Western movie queues."

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